



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,
HELD AT PHILADELPHIA, FOR PROMOTING USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

VOL. XXV.

JULY TO DECEMBER, 1888.

No. 123.

First Contribution to the Folk lore of Philadelphia and its Vicinity.

By Henry Phillips, Jr.

(Read before the American Philosophical Society, March 16, 1888.)

The present paper contains only such popular superstitions as have come under my notice. To make the subject cover a larger ground, say the State of Pennsylvania, or the United States, would be to open the door to a liability to error; and more good can be done by efforts of individual observers, each taking his own surrounding district, than by grasping after too great a number of items of folk-lore, perhaps too readily accepted as universal, while really only local. To the local searcher, therefore, must the bulk of such work be confided, knowing that from the mass of entirely reliable individual collections, the general principles that underlie them all will be ultimately evolved from correct data. All of these are at least a half century old, unless where otherwise stated..

BIRTH, DEATH AND MARRIAGE.

- 1.— Who changes her name and not the letter,
Marries for worse and not for better.
- 2.—Rice is thrown over a bride so that some of it falls in her bosom
(a custom that has originated in the past twenty years).
- 3.—An old shoe is thrown after a departing couple after marriage.
- 4.—When one shivers some one is walking over their grave.
- 5.— The child that's born on Sabbath day
Is blithe and bonny, good and gay.
Monday's child is fair of face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace,
Wednesday's child is born for woe,
Thursday's child has far to go,
Friday's child is for loving and giving,
Saturday's child has to work for a living.

6.—Marriages have the following results, according to the day on which celebrated :

Monday for health, Tuesday for wealth,
Wednesday the best day of all,
Thursday for losses, Friday for crosses,
Saturday no day at all.

Variant. Monday for wealth ;
Tuesday for health ;
Wednesday the best day of all ;
Thursday for crosses ;
Friday for losses ;
Saturday no luck at all.

7.—It is unlucky to marry in May.

8.—A bride must wear

Something old and something new,
Something borrowed, and something blue.

The borrowed is apt to be a handkerchief ; the blue, garters.

9.—A child must first be taken up stairs before it is taken down ; otherwise it will never rise in life.

10.—Women lose a tooth at every confinement.

11.—A piece of wedding-cake if placed under one's pillow will bring a dream of one's future spouse.

12.— Find nine peas in a pod, put them over the door,
The first one that enters is yours evermore.

13.—It is bad luck to rock an empty cradle as the child to whom it belongs will soon die.

14.—In order that a dying man should die easily the windows of the room must be thrown open.

15.— Happy the bride the sun shines on,
Happy the corpse the rain rains on.

Variant. Lucky the bride that the sun shines on,
Blessed the corpse that the rain falls on.

16.—A big blue vein over the nose is a sign of a short life.

17.—The builder of a dwelling house dies before he can live in it a long while.

18.—If a dog howls at night it is a sign of death to some one near by ; a sick person will surely die. Some say the same of the screeching of a cat at night, especially if a woman be sick.

19.—To break a mirror or other object of glass is unlucky ; the former announces death.

- 20.—The fall of a mirror or of a picture announces death.
- 21.—It is unlucky to wear black if not in mourning ; some relation will die, and give occasion to wear it.
- 22.—A wedding ring must never be taken off the finger when once put on.
- 23.—A baby's nails should never be cut, as it will make the child light-fingered.
- 24.—A corpse will bleed at the touch or in the presence of its murderer.
- 25.—Twins seldom both reach maturity.
- 26.—A six months' child can live ; a seven months', never.
- 27.—Whoever is the possessor of a caul cannot be drowned. It is very lucky to be born with one ; it should not be parted with.
- 28.—If two persons break the wishbone of a fowl, the one who gets the shortest end will be married the first.
- 29.—If one meets a white mule, and afterwards counts forty white horses, he or she will then meet the future spouse.
- 30.—It is unlucky to cross through the line of a funeral procession.
- 31.—The hooting of an owl presages death to one of those who hear it, within the year. To avoid the evil effects of the omen one of its hearers must take off a shoe and turn it over to counteract the bad augury.
- 32.—If four persons accidentally cross hands when shaking hands in taking leave, it is a sign of a marriage.
- 33.—If the wishbone of a fowl is placed over a door, the person who places it there will marry the first person of the opposite sex who enters under it.
- 34.—A child born on a Sunday will never lack for bread.
- 35.—If one sews with black thread on a white garment, the same needle will soon be used for the person's shroud.
- 36.—If one removes the skin of an apple whole and whirls it three times around the head with the left hand, it will assume, on falling, the initial letter of the name of one's destined spouse.
- 37.—It is unlucky to postpone a wedding.

WEATHER AND SEASONS.

(a)—*Celestial* :

- 1.— If Candlemas-day be bright and clear
There'll be two winters in the year.
- 2.—If it rains on Candlemas-day the winter is over ; if clear it is but half done.

- 3.— If Candlemas day is fair and bright,
Winter will take a rougher flight.
- 4.—Of a storm :
Long foretold, long last,
Soon come, soon past.
- 5.— A red sky in the morning is the sailor's warning,
A red sky at night is the sailor's delight.
- 6.—A halo around the moon denotes falling weather.
- 7.—The rainbow presages that the rain is over ; also that no other universal deluge will ever take place.
- 8.—When the new moon lies with its horns up, it is a sign of dry weather. If the horns are downturned, it is a sign of rain.
- 9.—It always rains Quaker meeting week.
- 10.— When the wind veers against the sun,
Trust it not, for back it will run.
When the wind is in the south
It is in the rain's mouth.
- 11.— Evening gray and morning red,
Traveler wise will keep his bed.
- 12.— If February gives much snow
A fine summer it doth foreshow.
- 13.— A rainbow in the morning is the sailor's warning,
A rainbow at night is the sailor's delight.
- 14.—If it rains when the sun is shining people say, "the devil is beating his wife."

(b)—*Terrestrial* :

- 1.—If the groundhog sees his shadow on the second of February, he goes back to his hole in the ground for another six weeks' doze, as he knows that the winter will endure so much longer ; *per contra*, if he cannot see it, he stays out, for he knows that the severe weather is past.
- 2.—When cats wash their faces it is a sign of rain.
- 3.—If the oak gets into leaf before the ash, the year will be a fine and productive one ; if contrary, it will be wet and backward.
- 4.—When a spider elongates his web it is a sign of fair weather ; when he shortens it, the weather is about to be stormy.
- 5.—If the Cicadas sing loud at nightfall 'tis a sign of a clear warm day to follow.
- 6.—A green Christmas predicts a fat churchyard.

- 7.—Fresh ant-hills presage pleasant weather.
- 8.—Cobwebs on the grass indicate a clear day.
- 9.—The croak of a tree-frog indicates rain.
- 10.—The cry of the “rainbird” or cuckoo presages rain.
- 11.—The weather of the ensuing winter can be known by inspection of the breastbone of a goose : it will be cold in proportion to the intensity of color of any dark spots that may be seen on its side.
- 12.—When smoke ascends it is a sign of fair weather : if it descends, of rain.
- 13.—The weather changes with the phases of the moon.
- 14.—When many crows gather together and chatter it is a sign of bad weather.
- 15.—If a cock crows at an unaccustomed hour of the night the weather is about to change.
- 16.—St. Patrick’s day is expected to be stormy.

FOLK MEDICINE.

- 1.—A wedding-ring rubbed on a sty will cure it.
- 2.—Fasting spittle will cure a sore eye.
- 3.—To cure a bite use a hair of the dog that caused it : it is sometimes placed between two slices of buttered bread and eaten as a sandwich.
- 4.—Anointing any instrument that caused a wound will heal it.
- 5.—If one sneezes seven times it will be a sure relief for a cold.
- 6.—It is best to sleep with the head towards the North.
- 7.—A horsechestnut carried in the pocket will cure piles.
- 8.—A potato carried in the trousers’ pocket will cure the rheumatism.
- 9.—A horsechestnut carried in the pocket will bring good luck ; by some persons it is carried as a cure for rheumatism.
- 10.—A cold key dropped down the back is a sure cure for a bleeding at the nose.
- 11.—Children can be cured of the whooping cough by inhaling the ammoniacal fumes at gas works.
- 12.—A cockroach stewed in sweet oil will relieve ear-ache if the decoction be poured in the ear.
- 13.—If a piece of bacon is rubbed on a wart and buried under a stone, the wart will disappear with the decaying meat.

14.—A pain in the side caused by fast walking can be cured by sitting on a stone by the wayside, after spitting beneath it.

15.—Hiccoughs can be cured by holding the breath until fifty are counted, during which time the end of one's finger must be intently regarded ; at the end of that period a small spider will make its appearance on the tip of the finger.

16.—Seven sips of water will cure hiccoughs.

17.—A young person ought not to sleep with an older one, as it robs the younger one of its vitality.

18.—To wash the face with dew newly fallen on the first of May will remove freckles.

19.—The rays of the moon falling on the face of a sleeping person will produce nausea : some say, delirium or insanity.

20.—A piece of rope with which a person has been hung will cure by its touch fits, epilepsy, etc.

21.—Jaundice in children can be cured by giving them their own water to drink.

22.—Boys believe that by urinating on their limbs before going in to swim they can be protected against the cramp.

SIGNS AND OMENS, PORTENTS AND SUPERSTITIONS.

1.—If one wears out a round hole in the centre of the sole of a shoe, it is a sign that one will want bread.

2.—It is lucky to touch a hunchback's hump.

3.—It is lucky to see three hunchbacks in succession in one walk.

4.—If a fire kindles quickly and briskly, one has a smart lover.

5.—If the bottom of a woman's gown is turned up at the back, it is a sign of a new dress. Also, that one's lover is thinking of her.

6.—If the soles of the feet itch, it is a sign of walking on strange ground.

7.—If the elbow or knee itches, it prognosticates a change of bed-fellow.

8.—If a piece of bread falls from one's hand, some one is coming a begging.

9.—If one takes a second piece of bread while the first is still uneaten, it is a sign that some one grudges it to you ; *aliter*, some one is coming a begging.

10.—The air bubbles in a cup of tea, coffee, etc., denote money coming.

- 11.—Sparks flying towards one from a fire denote money coming.
- 12.—It is bad luck for a white cat or pigeon to come to a house.
- 13.—It is unlucky to dress one leg entirely before anything is put on the other.
- 14.—The left leg is always to be partly dressed first.
- 15.—Lucky at cards, unlucky in love, and *vice versa*.
- 16.—To find a spider or vermin on one's clothing, is a sign of good luck, generally money.
- 17.—One must always go out by the door one enters. Never go out of the back door if you have entered by the front, and *vice versa*. It is most unlucky. The idea here seems to be that of crossing or dividing the house.
- 18.—Hair and nails should be cut with the waxing moon.
- 19.—To sneeze three times before breakfast is the sign of a stranger.
- 20.—If one sings before breakfast he may cry before supper.
- 21.—Boys always spit on new clothes for good luck : they call the practice "wetting it."
- 22.—A present of a knife or other sharp-pointed instrument will cut friendship ; it is customary when receiving such a present to give a small coin in exchange.
- 23.—It is unlucky to pass under a rope or a ladder.
- 24.—It is bad luck to meet a cross eyed person on first leaving the house.
- 25.—It is unlucky ever to open an umbrella in a house.
- 26.—Friday is an unlucky day ; anything begun or done on that day will turn out badly.
- 27.—A new pocket-book should be given with some money in it.
- 28.—The first money received on a day is to be spat on for luck.
- 29.— If the nose itches it is a sign of danger,
 Of seeing a fool, or kissing a stranger.
- 30.—A fire won't burn if the sun shines on it.
- 31.—If the right hand itches it is a sign of receiving money ; if the left, to pay it out.
- 32.—Clothing put on accidentally wrong side out signifies a piece of good luck ; in this case it must be so worn until night.
- 33.—To spend money on New Year's day before having received any, is a bad sign, as it foreshadows more outlay than income during the year.
- 34.—If the first person one meets on leaving the house on New Year's

day is a person of the opposite sex, it foretells good luck for the rest of the year ; if of the same sex it is a bad omen.

35.—It is wrong to spit towards the sky.

36.—It is wrong to place a veil over the face, or to counterfeit death.

37.—One's bed must not be made up in such a manner that the feet are towards the door, as thus the dead are carried out.

38.—If two persons interlace their little fingers it will stop a dog from defecating and will oblige him to change the place which he has chosen for the performance.

39.—White spots in the nails indicate presents.

40.—If a horse-hair be thrown into water it will become a snake.

41.—For every gray hair pulled out seven will come.

42.—Small ears are a sign of avarice ; large, of generosity.

43.—Children who play with fire will wet the bed.

44.—Old maids are to lead apes in hell.

45.—If when about to say anything it is forgotten, it is a lie.

46.—If one falls upstairs, he or she will not be married during that year.

47.—It is lucky to have money in one's pockets when the new moon is first seen : it must be turned over several times for increase. If one has not money then, it is a bad omen.

48.—It is unlucky to destroy a swallow's nest.

49.—Speak of a person and one will hear from or see him or her.

50.—A black cat is considered especially unlucky by sailors.

51.—It is unlucky to point a loaded weapon at a person, as the devil loads them on such an occasion.

52.—The shell of an egg should always be broken into pieces, or else witches will use them to ride in.

53.—To spill salt is unlucky ; the omen can be averted by three pinches of salt being thrown over the left shoulder.

54.—Once having gone out it is unlucky to return ; in this case the ill-luck can be averted by taking a seat before making a fresh start. Some say you must sit down and cross your legs.

55.—If the right ear burns it is a sign that some one is speaking well of one ; if the left, bad.

56.—Thirteen persons are unlucky at table or any other gathering, as one will die within the year.

57.—A horse shoe must be picked up, if seen in the street and brought home, and hung over a door for luck.

58.—Meat exposed to the light of the moon will spoil sooner than if exposed to the sun.

59.—There is a peculiar coldness in the rays of the moon.

60.—That there is a face in the full moon. Every one can see the face of his or her absent lover.

61.—Any wish formed during the shooting of a star will be fulfilled.

62.—That cats have nine lives.

63.—To keep a cat from running away from a strange house one must anoint its paws with butter.

64.—Hares sleep with their eyes open ; similarly weasels.

65. Children are told that to get behind a door and eat a piece of gristle will make the hair curl.

66.— A whistling woman and a crowing hen
Will never come to a good end.

67.—When one sneezes it is proper to say, " God bless you."

68.—One who looks in a mirror at night will see spirits looking over his shoulder.

69.—If two people by chance say the same thing at once, neither must speak till a wish has been formed.

70.—The wear of shoes :

Wear at the toe, live to see woe ;
Wear at the side, live to be a bride ;
Wear at the ball, live to spend all ;
Wear at the heel, live to save a deal.

Variant : Wear at the toe, pay as you go ;
Wear at the heel, pay a good deal ;
Wear at the ball, live to spend all.

71.— Sneeze on a Monday, you sneeze for danger ;
Sneeze on a Tuesday, you kiss a stranger ;
Sneeze on a Wednesday, you receive a letter ;
Sneeze on a Thursday, you'll get something better ;
Sneeze on a Friday, expect great sorrow ;
Sneeze on a Saturday, get a sweetheart to-morrow ;
Sneeze on a Sunday, your safety seek,
The devil will chase you the whole of the week.

72.— Cut your nails Monday, you cut them for news ;
Cut them on Tuesday, a pair of new shoes ;
Cut them on Wednesday, you cut them for health ;
Cut them on Thursday, 'twill add to your wealth ;

Cut them on Friday, you cut them for woe ;
Cut them on Saturday, a journey you'll go ;
Cut them on Sunday, you cut them for evil,
All the week long you'll be ruled by the devil.

73.—Children are told that to eat crust will make their legs fat : *aliter*, their hair curl.

74.—If the rays of the moon fall on the face of a sleeper, he can be made to answer any question truly and to reveal secrets.

75.—That if one meets a red-haired woman in the street, she will be immediately followed by a white horse. (This has only come into vogue in the United States within the past two years.)

76.—It is bad luck for a bird to fly into a room.

77.—Crops will only prosper when planted in the right sign of the moon.

78.—It is unlucky for a girl to give her lover a pair of slippers.

79.—To find a "measuring worm" on one's clothes indicates a new garment. Some say it is a sign of shroud.

80.—If a "W" appears on the back of the cicada (locust), it forebodes war ; if a "P" can be traced, it is a sign of peace.

81.—One who is going away in a carriage must never be looked after by those remaining in the house as it will bring the person bad luck.

82.—If threads are left unbasted in a garment it is a sign that it is not paid for.

83.—If a hair-pin falls, or a woman's skirt becomes loose or drops, it is a sign that one's absent lover is thinking of her : *aliter*, that he is false.

84.—If a fly buzzes persistently around a person it is a sign of news to come, or a stranger.

85.—If one forgets a glove, handkerchief, or other article by accident on leaving a room it is unlucky to return for it.

86.—A red dog is proverbially worthless ; equally so a yellow dog.

87.—Shoes and slippers when not in wear must be placed on the floor with their heels almost joining and the toes pointing outward at an acute angle.

88.—Letters should be torn up, never burned nor thrown away whole ; otherwise it is unlucky.

89.—It is very lucky to be followed in the street by any stray domestic animal.

90.—A horse with one or more white feet is considered more or less impaired in value :

Four white feet and a white nose—
Throw him to the crows.

91.—It is unlucky to part the fingers of any one with one's own hand ; it betokens a violent quarrel.

92.—A hole in one's stocking signifies a letter in the post-office.

93.—It is extremely lucky to walk accidentally in ordure.

94.—If a bird should defecate on a person passing underneath it is a sign of great good luck.

95.—When the wick of the candle has grown long and sputters it is said to have a coffin in it.

96.—When a coal jumps out of a fire it is a sign of a stranger : *aliter*, of a coffin.

97.—A knife, fork, scissors, etc., falling on the floor and sticking up-right is the sign of the coming of a stranger.

98.—If a knife falls on the floor without sticking up in it, it is a sign of a strange woman coming : if a fork, a man.

99.—Bread baked on a Sunday is never good.

100.—Dreams go by contraries.

101.—A dream told before breakfast is sure to come true.

102.—It is very lucky if the first person met on leaving the house in the morning be a negro.

103.— See a pin and pick it up,
 All that day will have good luck :
 See a pin and let it lay,
 Bad luck sure for all that day.

104.—Moles on the flesh are signs of good portent.

105.—Hairy people are of strong constitution.

106.—It is unlucky to wear a black pin in one's clothes if not in mourning.

107.—It is unlucky to try on mourning clothes if not in mourning.

108.—Odd numbers are lucky.

109.—Midnight to one o'clock in the morning is the hour especially chosen for spirits to appear on earth.

110.—A person who drinks from the same vessel as another, if he puts his lips in the place where his predecessor drank from, will know all his secrets.

111.—When sparks fly from a candle it indicates the arrival of a letter : the direction towards which they go shows the quarter whence it may be expected.

112.—It is bad to drink water before seating oneself for a meal.

113.—A coin with a hole in it should be kept as a pocket piece for good luck.

114.—It is unlucky to eat in the street.

115.—It is unlucky to burn bread or other food.

116.—Children are told that if a dog should get one of their extracted teeth, they will get a dog's tooth in its place.

117.—Children are told that if they refrain from putting their tongue in the cavity from which a tooth has been extracted, that they will have in its place a *golden* tooth.

118.—To stop a dog from howling at night one's shoes must be turned upside down when the sound is heard.

119.—To find any lost article a key is placed in a Bible or large book, then fastened and held in such a manner that it can move. At the mention of the place where the lost article is, or the person who took it, the book will make a movement.

120.—It is very unlucky to stumble.

121.—It is unlucky to kill a lady bug.

122.—To kill a lady bug will produce a thunder storm.

NOTE.—According to the eminent scholar, D. Alejandro Guichot y Sierra, the following of the foregoing superstitions are likewise current in Andalusia :

Birth, Death and Marriage—Nos. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 ; *Weather, Celestial*—Nos. 2, 6, 7, 8 ; *Weather, Terrestrial*—Nos. 2, 15 ; *Medicine*—Nos. 6, 16.

General Superstitions—Nos. 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 51, 52, 55, 56, 62, 63, 64, 67, 68, 81, 88, 89, 109, 111, 112, 114.

The Classification and Nomenclature of Metalline Minerals.

By T. Sterry Hunt.

(Read before the American Philosophical Society, May 4, 1888.)

1. The writer in April, 1885, presented to the National Academy of Sciences the project of A Natural System in Mineralogy, which was farther elaborated in an essay before the Royal Society of Canada in May of the same year, published in Volume III of the Transactions of that Society, and with revisions and additions, in his Mineral Physiology and Physiog-